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BANGLADESH

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Near East & South Asia

BANGLADESH

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Regional Affairs

Economic Cooperation Pact Signed With Pakistan

92AS1387A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 23 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Wednesday signed an agreement on economic and commercial cooperation between them to foster mutually beneficial relationship among the private sectors of the two countries, reports BSS.

The agreement, the second such between the apex bodies of private sectors of Bangladesh and Pakistan, in reality is the renewal of the first one signed in Dhaka in 1984. The five-year long first agreement, expired in 1989.

Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, President, FBCCI, and Mian Habib Ullah, President, FPCCI signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations at FBCCI Bhavan in presence of leading businessmen and members of Pakistani trade delegation. S.H. Khilji, Commercial Secretary of the Pakistan Embassy was also present and spoke on the occasion.

The signing came on the concluding day of the five-day visit of 19-member FPCCI delegation to Bangladesh. During their stay here, besides holding discussions with their counterparts, the delegation visited Chittagong and met a number of ministers.

While recognizing the long historic relations and immense possibilities of improving economic and commercial ties between the two countries, the two sides were of the view that economic and trade relations have to be forged within the framework of the law and regulations of both the countries.

Before signing the accord, Mr. Mahbubur Rahman renewed FBCCI's pledge and determination to fulfil the obligation stated in the agreement and also to work for mutual benefit. The agreement would act as an "instrument" for both federations to march ahead.

Reciprocating the sentiment, the leader of the Pakistani delegation and President of FPCCI Mr. Habibullah expressed his happiness at the renewal of the accord. He assured his organisation's full cooperation for upholding the spirit contained in the agreement. "The agreement will be turned into practical shape," he firmly stated.

The agreement interalia stipulates that both parties will exchange regular market information about economic development to open up further possibilities for increased exchange of trade between them, organise annual meeting of their representatives alternatively at each other's place and assist visits of commercial and economic delegations to each other's countries.

Both parties agreed to set up Bangladesh-Pakistan joint trade and economic committee as soon as possible consisting of representatives nominated by the federations and also agreed to assist in the amicable and friendly settlement of disputes between their members through conciliation and negotiations.

The FBCCI and FPCCI further agreed to assist the enterprises, organisations in their respective countries to participate in international for a joint basis, wherever considered necessary, the document said.

The two-way trade between the two countries is around 150 million U.S. dollars with balance remaining favourable to Pakistan.

Plans for December SAARC Summit Announced

92AS1380A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 22 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] The Seventh summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] will be held in Dhaka on 12-14 December, it was officially announced in Dhaka on Tuesday, reports UNB.

A Foreign Ministry press release said heads of state and government of member countries Bangladesh Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be part in the moot.

The sixth summit was held in Colombo in December last year.

This will be the second time Bangladesh will host the highest level meeting of the association which was first conceived and proposed by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in 1980.

The first summit was held in Dhaka in December 1985 when the SAARC was formally launched to promote the socio-economic condition of more than one billion people in the region.

At the forthcoming summit, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will be [words illegible] nation forum and she will hold this position till the election of the next chairperson at the eighth summit sometime next year.

The summit will be preceded by a two-day meeting of the Council of Ministers from 10 December. The meeting of the Council comprising the Foreign Ministers of all member countries, will also be preceded by a two-day of the standing Committee of the Foreign Secretaries. A meeting of the Programme Committee at the senior officials will be held on 6 December.

A high level committee headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has been constituted to issue necessary policy guidelines and instructions in respect of preparation and conduct of the meetings.

Under the apex body, the press release said, there will be a number of committees responsible for different aspects of the seven-nation gathering.

These committees will be headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Information Minister the Mayor of [words illegible] the State Minister for Cultural Affairs.

A preparatory committee for holding the summit has been formed with former Foreign Secretary Faruq Ahmed Chowdhury as its honorary chairman.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the supervision of Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, will be responsible for overall coordination and all substantive aspects of the meetings.

A SAARC Summit cell with Director General Q.A.M.A. as its chief coordinator has been set up at the Ministry.

Internal Affairs

Upazila Parishad Dissolution Hearing Ends

92AS1400A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 21 Jul 92 p 10

[Article: "Hearing of UZ (Upazila) Case Concludes"]

[Text] Running upazila by bureaucrats after dissolving the Upazila Parishad is unconstitutional as the constitution provides for people's representative at every local government body, reports UNB.

This was stated by Barrister Amirul Islam in his submission on Monday before a full court bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court hearing appeals against the High Court Division judgement on upazila parishad dissolution.

Hearing of the case ended on Monday with Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed presiding over the bench.

Referring to a US court judgement, he said only a notification was needed to form a municipality and in many cases municipalities were formed without any notification and those were recognised as local government in the constitution.

Barrister Islam argued that article 59 and 60 remained suspended when the upazila ordinance was promulgated.

Contradicting with the argument of the Attorney General that fundamental state policy cannot be made affected by court, he said all articles of the constitution should be treated with equal importance.

He said we need to resist the process of using local government according to the political will of the government with the changes of governments.

It was hinted in the constitution that the objective to form local government was a permanent and continuing concept and such fundamental things cannot be changed by laws.

"Judges have taken oath to uphold the constitution as whole not any part of it," he said.

Besides, if any article of the constitution is needed to be made ineffective then it would have to be clearly mentioned in the constitution, Barrister Islam argued.

He termed article 7, 11, 59 and 60 of the Bangladesh constitution as unique and said such those do not exist in any other constitution of the subcontinent.

Acting President of Upazila Parishad Chairman Samity Ahsanullah Master had filed the petition with the Appellate Division challenging the High Court Division Judgement on the dissolution of upazila parishad.

Attorney General Aminul Huq, Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan and Assistant Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mostafa appeared for the state.

Besides Barrister Islam, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Barrister Mahmudul Islam, Barrister Nihat Kabir, Advocate Zakir Ahmed Advocate AFM Mesbahuddin Ahmed and Advocate Abul Baset Majumder appeared for the petitioners.

Awami League Postpones Council Meet

92AS1385A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 24 Jun 92 p 1

[Text] In a dramatic move, Awami League has refixed the date of its central biennial council 18-19 September from 27-28 June reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee today (Tuesday) with Party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

A resolution of the meeting said the council date has been shifted by the central committee after reviewing the country's latest political development.

The meeting in another resolution, extended total support to the 30 June "march" towards parliament, announced by the national coordination body of the Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee.

Competent sources told UNB that Awami League strategists are planning a new agitation across the country soon to mobilise public opinion on issues such as trial of golam Azam, Indemnity Ordinance, independence of judiciary, effective parliament and the "government-sponsored" terrorism.

The Awami League is likely to declare its fresh action programme after the 30 June "march," the sources said.

A meeting of the Awami League Central Committee will be held on 25 June (Thursday) at 3 pm at the party central office, says a press release.

Workers Party Central Leader Killing Condemned

92AS1384A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 24 Jun 92
p 3

[Text] Workers Party of Bangladesh yesterday condemned the killing of its central leader Abdus Salam, reports UNB.

Salam, also the Organising Secretary of Akhchashi Union, was gunned down by some armed miscreants near North Bengal Sugar Mills in Rajshahi on Monday.

Workers Party President Alam Sen and General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon, MP [member of Parliament], in a joint statement demanded immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to those involved in the killings. They also expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Central and district units of Workers Party will organise protest meetings and processions on Thursday.

Paper Reviews Golam Azam Dispute

92AS1399A Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English 27 Jun 92
p 8

[Article by Hiranmay Karlekar: "The Golam Azam Factor; A Major Challenge Facing Begum Khaleda Zia's Government"]

[Text] On June 21, Bangladesh observed a 12-hour general strike called by the National Coordination Committee for the Elimination of the Killers and Collaborators of 71 and the Implementation of the Spirit of the Liberation War (Muktijudher Chetana Bastabayan O Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samanyay Samiti). Marked by mob violence and police action, the general strike left at least 200 injured. It was called to press for the execution of the death sentence passed on Golam

Azam, Amir (head) of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami and one of the principal collaborators of the Pakistani Army during the Liberation War of 1971, by a People's Court held under the Coordination Committee's auspices in Dhaka on March 26 last. Azam was indicted for involvement in genocide, rape, arson and conspiring against the independence of Bangladesh.

On June 20, two persons were killed and over 60 injured in clashes during a six-hour general strike called throughout Bangladesh by several right-wing and fundamentalist organisations like the Freedom Party, supported by the killers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Jamaat-i-Islami, Chhatra Shibir (Students' Camp) and Student-Youth Commandos, the Committee Against Indian Agents (CAIA). They demanded the banning of the Coordination Committee and trial of "Indian Agents," obviously identifying the later with the former by implication.

Clearly, Azam has become the eye of a storm raging in Bangladesh. The Coordination Committee, which comprises politicians, lawyers, teachers, artists, literary figures, victims and veterans of the Liberation War, is supported by the Awami League, the National Awami Party (NAP), the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and several other parties. Members representing these cheered as Sheikh Hasina, President of the Awami League and Leader of the Opposition, moved a resolution in Bangladesh's Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament) on April 17 demanding the constitution of a special tribunal to try Azam as a war criminal.

Sheikh Hasina's resolution was defeated by a voice vote on April 19 when all opposition members, except those of the Jamaat, were absent from the House. She repeated the demand for Azam's trial as a war criminal at a large public meeting in Dhaka on April 22 where she called upon the people to rout the forces shielding him. Claiming that there was no difference between what the Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, and the acting Jamaat chief, Abbas Ali Khan, said on the Azam issue, she warned the Bangladesh National Party's (BNP) government against pushing the country into a civil war.

Who is Golam Azam? Why has he suddenly emerged as the focus of a furious controversy? One of the principal collaborators in 1971, Azam fled to Pakistan after the liberation of Bangladesh and was involved in the East Pakistan Resurrection Movement until 1977. Returning to Bangladesh in 1978 on a Pakistani passport and a visa granted to him for 14 days ostensibly to enable him to see his sick mother, he stayed on with the obvious indulgence of the Ziaur Rahman and Ershad governments. He has been the main inspiration behind Bangladesh's pro-Pakistan, communal and fundamentalist organisations. Remarkably, none of the major political parties had protested against this and after the February 1991 elections, Begum Khaleda Zia depended on the support of the 20 Jamaat MPs [Member of Parliament] in the Jatiya Sangsad until the BNP got an absolute majority following a series of by-elections and the election of 30 women candidates by the elected MPs.

All this only lends a greater poignancy to our second question: why the present storm? Azam symbolises the forces of communalism and obscurantism which have become increasingly assertive in Bangladesh where the secular, liberal and democratic elements have always opposed these forces. Also opposed to Azam and his activities are the victims of the Liberation War. It is not a coincidence that the Coordination Committee demanding his execution is headed by Jahanara Imam, a highly

respected author whose son, Rumi, never returned after having been taken away for interrogation by the Pakistanis in August 1971.

The anger of the multitudes of Bangladeshis who had to bear the brunt of the Pakistani Army's brutalities, found expression in the searingly brilliant poem *Abhishap Dichhi* by Bangladesh's tallest poet, Samsur Rahman. Ever since the liberation, a large number of people have consistently demanded punishment of the collaborators and have been deeply resentful of the general amnesty granted by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on November 30, 1973. In fact, the beginnings of the Coordination Committee can to a large extent be traced to the activities of the Mukti-juddha Chetana Bikas Kendra (Centre for the Growth of the Spirit of the Liberation War) set up several years ago and its publication, in February, 1987, of Shahriyar Kabir's explosive book *Ektattorer Ghatok O Dalalra Ke Kothaye (Who and Where are the Killers and Collaborators of 71)*. Significantly, Kabir identified Golam Azam as the most despicable "of the treacherous collaborators."

The Coordination Committee's present movement has obviously been triggered by Golam Azam's formal installation as the Jamaat's Amir early this year. It sent out the clear signal that the communal and fundamentalist forces have become bold enough to flout the Bangladesh law prohibiting foreigners from holding such positions. This alarmed the secular and democratic elements which have been highly critical of the Islamisation of Bangladesh ever since President Ziaur Rahman removed the word "secular" from the Bangladeshi constitution in 1977. They felt they must come out against the fundamentalists and the best way of doing this was to strike against Azam. They are being supported by the Awami League, the CPB, NAP [National Awami Party] and other parties which genuinely favour secularism and which also see in the issue an opportunity to embarrass Begum Khaleda Zia's government which arrested Golam Azam on March 24 under the Foreigners' Act—no doubt to take the wind out of the People's Court trial of March 26—and has kept him in custody since then. It argues that Azam's fate has to be decided by the courts whose functions cannot be taken over by the Coordination Committee. The essence of democracy is the rule of law. The Coordination Committee's supporters contend that the matter requires a political and not a legal decision. Would Bangladesh have won independence if the Liberation War was fought legally?

Legally, the government has a case. But it is reportedly also under pressure from several West Asian capitals not to act against Azam. Besides, it has to face the Jamaat and allied bodies which demand his release and action against the National Coordination Committee. It has been trying to tread the middle path. While it arrested Azam, it banned the holding of the People's Court on March 26, albeit without effect; a massive crowd attended its proceedings. Meanwhile, the drift of events is going against it. Police violence at the Dhaka Press Club after the general strike on June 21 has incensed journalists who have demanded resignation of the Home Minister and action against several officials including the Commissioner of Police, Dhaka. Newspapers observed a strike on June 22.

Clearly, Begum Khaleda Zia faces a major challenge in the Golam Azam issue. While she grapples with it, the question looms as to whether Bangladesh will be a secular democracy or a fundamentalist theocracy, which it will become if the forces behind Golam Azam gain ascendancy.

Jamaat Memo Demands Golam Azam Release

92AS1381A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 12 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Jamaat-e-Islami submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Saturday demanding immediate release of its Ameer Prof. Golam Azam, reports UNB.

It also asked the Government to ban all "illegal" activities of "Ganoadalatis" and prosecute them in the "sedition" case, filed for staging public trial of the Jamaat chief on charge of war crime committed during the liberation war in 1971.

The Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister received the memo handed over by a Jamaat delegation comprising Maulana Yusuf Ali, Abdul Qader Mollah, Sheikh Ansar Ali, MP [member of Parliament], ATM Azharul Islam and Jasimuddin Sarker after their march was stopped by police.

In the memorandum, Jamaat said ruling BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] and a segment of the opposition led by Awami League signed "an unlawful agreement" on 29 July to change a parliament decision and relieve the 24 "terrorist ganoadalatis" of the sedition charge.

"As a matter of fact, we (Jamaat) extended support to your party (BNP) to form Government with a sublime mission of upholding prestige of the Sangsad and democracy, but the signatories to the accord disgraced that great mission," said the memorandum signed by Jamaat Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami.

The accord, signed by Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury and Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain from the Treasury Bench and Deputy Opposition Leader Abdus Samad Azad and Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim from the other side, provided for lifting the case against the sponsors of "people's court" and trying Golam Azam, arrested under the Foreigners. [sentence as published]

The Jamaat note claimed Golam Azam as a born citizen of Bangladesh and said the Jatiya Sangsad discussed the Golam Azam issue twice "violating" parliamentary norms and tradition.

It said the signatories to the 29 July accord indirectly interfered in the matter which is subjudice and cut "a cruel joke" by promising to lift the case against the persons "involved in sedition."

By entering into the agreement, the signatories have also encouraged anarchists to stage ganoadalat in every house throwing challenge to the Government and the judiciary, Jamaat observed.

It further demanded exemplary punishment of the ganoadalatis for what the memo said killings in Khulna, Jhenidah, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Farikchhari, Joypurhat, Rajshahi and Faridpur.

Earlier, Jamaat held a rally at Magbazar crossing and proceeded towards Prime Minister's secretariat in a procession. Police intercepted the processionists in front of Hotel Sonargaon.

Meetings Held For, Against Golam Azam**Killers Elimination Committee**

92AS1398A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 19 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Article: "Blasts Disrupt Nirmul Body Meet; Immediate Trial of Azam Demanded"]

[Text] Bomb blasts, teargas shelling and baton charge marked the public meeting of the National Co-ordination Committee for the Elimination of Killers and Collaborators of 1971 and the Implementation of the Spirit of Liberation War at the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram mosque on Saturday afternoon.

Three attacks were made on the meeting of the co-ordination committee from Baitul Mukarram side where Jamaat-e-Islami was holding a meeting at the northern gate of the mosque.

Over six persons including three journalists were injured in the series of attacks chase and counter chase between the activists of the Jamaat-e-Islami and the co-ordination committee.

About 25 powerful bombs, 4 cocktails were blasted during the attack while police lobbed 24-rounds of teargas shells to defuse clash.

The injured were identified as Abdul Mannan, Dainik Sakaler Khabar, Golam Kibria, Dainik Gana Jagaran and a photographer of the Dainik Desh Bangla.

Detailed identity of the other victims could not be ascertained immediately.

According to some eye-witnesses a group of people armed with lethal weapons attacked the meeting of the co-ordination committee from the direction of Nur Hossain Square without any provocation. They blasted several powerful bombs near the venue of the co-ordination committee meeting at one stage the meeting participants ran helter-skelter for safety. Just after the attack a counter chase was made by the co-ordination committee activists. Later the attackers ran towards the meeting venue of Jamaat-e-Islami, following the strong resistance and counter chase by the co-ordination committee meeting participants.

When the co-ordination committee activists parading towards the National Press Club after the meeting at about 6.55 p.m., police intercepted the processions, lobbed about 7 teargas shells.

The co-ordination committee leaders blamed the government, police and the Jamaat-e-Islami activists for the attempt to foil their public meeting.

UNB adds: Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee on Saturday threw fresh action programme and warned of a grater movement against the government if it continued to back the anti-liberation forces in the crusade against Golam Azam.

Convener of the committee Jahanara Imam announced the programme at a tension-packed meeting at the southern gate of Baitul Mukarram on Saturday.

The countrywide agitation includes thana gherao today (Sunday), rally on the Bangabandhu Avenue on July 20 protesting alleged desecration of the national flag in Kushtia by police and grand rallies here on October 14 and also on December 16.

The government role before, during and after the staging of Ganoadalat, which tried the controversial Jamaat chief, "was in favour of the anti-liberation forces," Jahanara Imam told the largely attended meeting which was disrupted for about 30 minutes after the scared audience had gone berserk on rumours that Jamaatis were charging towards the venue.

Witnesses said at least 20 people were injured when police lathicharged the Nirmul Committee activists while staging an angry protest after the rally against the reported Jamaat attempt.

Presided over by Mohammad Sadeq Ahmed Khan, the gathering was also addressed, among others, by Lt. Col. (Retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Dr. Ahmed Sharif, Maulana Abdul Awal, Prof. Hamida Rahman and journalists Faiz Ahmed and Shahriar Kabir.

Jahanara alleged now the politics of BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] had bogged down on fundamentalism as it always tried to appease and save Jamaat-e-Islami in its political crisis and whenever legitimacy of its politics was questioned.

She asked the government to maintain neutrality in dealing with the movement of the Committee and not use the administration in its own interest because, she said, the demand for execution of the Ganoadalat verdict is not only the demand of the committee but also of the people from all walks.

The government must execute the people's court verdict if it wants to run the country, she asserted.

Referring to the joint declaration of the three alliances during the anti-Ershad movement, she said BNP after assuming power backed out from all major political commitments.

The BNP government has also signed an agreement with the main opposition led by Awami League in parliament for putting Golam Azam on the dock as per law of the land, but is again crying to slip out, she told the rally.

Mrs. Jahanara Imam, leader of the Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul committee, on Saturday reiterated her demand for immediate trial of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Prof. Golam Azam as a war criminal and called upon the government to maintain its image as a pro-liberation political force.

Addressing a public meeting at the South Gate of Baitul Mukram Saturday afternoon Mrs. Imam announced the next course of action of her committee to strengthen the demand for implementation of the verdict of the "Gano Adalat."

Presided over by Sadeq Ahmed, the meeting was addressed, among others by a number of senior leaders of the committee and the "Gano Adalat" including Lt. Col. (Retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman Dr. Ahmed Sharif, Faiz Ahmed, Naim Jahangir and Shariar Kabir.

According to the new programme memoranda will be placed before the government at all the upazila headquarters on July 19 to press their demand for implementation of the people's court verdict National representative conference will be held on August 14 in Dhaka and a "grand rally" in the capital on October 14.

The Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee will hold a meeting at the Bangladesh Avenue on July 20 to protest the dishonouring of the national flag by a police officer in Kushtia, she announced.

Mrs. Jahanara Imam called for carrying the movement forward democratically. She said that despite provocations by the anti-liberation Jamaat-e-Islami they would maintain tolerance and lead the current campaign against the anti-liberation forces and fundamentalists to its cherished goal.

Mrs. Imam hoped that by December this year the Movement would reach its final phase with countrywide mobilisation for trial of Golam Azam as a killer and collaborator of the Pakistan occupation army.

A number of resolutions adopted in the meeting included resentment against dismissal of Mr. Shahriar Kabir from the position of executive Editor of weekly Bichitra and demand early withdrawal of the order against a person who had been serving the weekly for 20 years.

Jamaat-e-Islami

92AS1398B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 19 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Article: "Jamaat Blasts June 29 Government-Opposition Accord"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh would continue the movement till the release of its leader Prof. Golam Azam. [sentence as published]

Stating this at a big public meeting at the northern gate of Baitul Mokkerram mosque on Saturday afternoon, the acting Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Mr. Abbas Ali Khan said that Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was voted to power with the help of Jamaat-e-Islami but now the BNP had compromised with those discarded leftist political parties.

Presided over by the Amir of City Jamaat-e-Islami Mr. A.T.M. Azharul Islam, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Moulana Motiur Rahman Nizami, M.P. Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami, Mr. Shamsur Rahman, Naeb-e-Amir, Moulana Abul Kalam Mohammed Yusuf, Assistant General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami, Mr. Abdul Kader Mollah, publicity Secretary, Sheikh Ansar Ali, M.P. Prof. Mujibur Rahman and Mr. Jasimuddin Sarker.

Mr. Khan observed that Prof. Golam Azam was a pious Muslim and the Government arrested him making mockery of rule of law. He said that the people would not accept the Government's agreement with Awami League and its allies on June 29 last which already discarded by the people.

The acting Amir remarked that this agreement would help defy the judiciary and force the country through chaos.

Mr. Khan further asserted that identifying Prof. Golam Azam as foreigner was against the law and conscience.

Moulana Nizami said that Government had arrested Prof. Golam Azam illegally on March 24 last surrendering to the trouble mongers. He said that there was no scope for raising any question about the citizenship of Prof. Golam Azam.

The Secretary General observed that Prof. Azam was not only a citizen of this country by birth but also a top ranking leader for a long time. He said that Prof. Azam was the General Secretary of Dhaka University central students' union (DUCSU) and took active part in the language movement.

The Secretary General regretted that the citizenship of 84 persons were ceased but later all were restored except Prof. Golam Azam. He said that sponsors of the People's Court were

engaged in creating chaos and conflict capitalising the issue of trying Prof. Golam Azam after 20 years by ignoring the major problems of the country.

Mr. Shamsur Rahman in his speech cautioned the ruling part for signing an agreement to withdraw the cases against the sponsors of the People's Court.

He termed the arrest of Prof. Golam Azam as the violation of international law.

Moulana Yusuf in his address said the sponsors of the People's Court were the agents of India and they (sponsor) never protested the atrocities and oppression meted out to the Muslims.

The two feuding faction of pro-Awami League Chhatra League fought each other on the Dhaka University campus for the second consecutive day, on Saturday, reports UNB.

More than 20 gunshots were traded in about 10 minutes since the trouble started at about 8 a.m. None was, however, reported hurt.

Campus sources said the Montu faction started shooting from its Salimullah Hall stronghold towards 'enemies' in Zahurul Huq Hall, the bastion of the Gopalganj group.

The two sides also exchanged heavy gunshots Friday morning. They have been at guns since May 27 Zahurul Hoq Hall was recaptured by the Montu group.

Meanwhile, a Chhatra League activist was assaulted allegedly by the workers of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in F Rahman Hall of the varsity today at about 4:30 p.m.

He was named Saidul Amin Tuhin, a 3rd year student of Finance and resident of the hall. The activists of JCD, the student wing of ruling BNP, also ransacked his room.

Meantime, the university authorities announced today fresh schedule of Honours and Masters examinations, now beginning August 29.

Earlier, both the exams had been shifted four times owing to frequent eruption of violence.

Ministry Press Note

92AS1398C Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 19 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Article: "Press Note"]

[Text] Two persons were killed when a mini bus carrying the supporters of Jamaat-e-Islam after its meeting came under attack by some unidentified people near Shilpa Bank at the Motijheel Commercial Area on Saturday evening, a Press Note issued by the Home Ministry said in Dhaka on Saturday night, reports BSS.

The bus was subjected to brick batting, hurling of bombs and shooting by 10 to 12 people and as a result six persons were injured.

Doctors on duty at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Ibne Sina Clinic declared two persons Atiqul Islam Dulal (22) of Munshiganj and Saijuddin (18), a student of Class Five of Nireshwar Dhakhil Madrassa, Munshiganj, dead when they were taken there for medical treatment, the Press Note said.

Condition of one of the injured was stated to be serious.

The Press Note said that the Jamaat-e-Islami organised a meeting at the Northern Gate of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque while the Committee for "Elimination of the Killers and Collaborators of 1971" held another meeting at the Southern Gate on Saturday afternoon.

It said about 400 to 500 people from the meeting of the Jamaat-e-Islami approached towards the "Zero Point" at about 6 p.m. and people from the other meeting also moved towards the "Zero Point."

Police on duty used teargas shells and dispersed both the groups and thereby prevented a possible clash between the warring crowds, the Press Note said.

The Press Note said that both the meetings ended peacefully before the Magreb Prayer.

However, the Press Note added, about 400 to 500 workers and supporters of the "Nirmul Committee" hurled brickbats and cocktail when the supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami came out through the southern gate of the mosque after the Magreb Prayed. Three persons were injured in the attack.

The police again lobbed teargas shells and resorted to mild lathi charge to disperse the crowd, the Press Note said.

The attackers regrouped at the Bangabandhu Avenue and tried to throw stones at the police and damage rickshaws without any provocation. The police again dispersed the attackers, the Press Note said.

But the attacks at 7:15 p.m. near the Shilpa Bank resulted in the killing of two persons, the Press Note said.

The Government hopes that concerned quarters would refrain themselves from resorting to violence and demonstrate tolerance and help the Government maintain peace and discipline, the Press Note said.

Paper Reports Hearing in Golam Azam Case

19 Jul Session

92AS1382A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 20 Jul 92
pp 1, 8

[Text] The High Court Division of the Supreme Court began hearing of the writ petition of Prof. Golam Azam, the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, challenging cancellation of his citizenship yesterday.

Appearing on behalf of Prof. Golam Azam, Barrister A.R. Yusuf submitted before the court that Prof. Golam Azam is a citizen of Bangladesh by birth and his forefathers were also born in the territory now known as Bangladesh. In a nutshell, Barrister Yusuf said that Prof. Golam Azam, as a student leader in 1948 had presented and read Memorandum before the the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan to make Bengali a state language of Pakistan. To substantiate his plea, Barrister Yusuf narrated before the court Prof. Golam Azam's birth, his long political career, his departure from the country in the end of 1971 and then his return to his homeland, Bangladesh and few other things. He also pointed out that one of his sons was serving in the Bangladesh Army. Golam Azam left Pakistan for Saudi Arabia in 1972 and then flew to London and applied for restoration of his citizenship when he came to know that he had been stripped of his citizenship for his anti-Bangladesh role in 1971.

Barrister Yusuf pleaded that the then Awami League Government had illegally stripped him of his citizenship for enmity built up with Prof. Golam Azam during 1970 elections.

"If anyone's citizenship lapses for remaining outside the territory, then what about the freedom fighters and the government in exile," Barrister Yusuf posed a question.

The Barrister further pointed out that Prof. Golam Azam's name was enrolled twice in the voters' lists in 1983 and in 1990 of Bangladesh. In addition, two Presidential candidates and the Prime Minister met him twice in 1991 and Prof. Golam Azam paid Municipal taxes and also addressed press conferences. And then he posed a question whether the Presidential candidates and the Prime Minister met a foreigner or a Bangladeshi.

Barrister Yusuf then cited examples of Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni, who served as an Ambassador of Pakistan for four years. Advocate Julmat Ali, Vice President of the ruling BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party], Sheikh Ansar Ali, the late Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, and a few others who lost their citizenship but duly applied in the similar cases. Prof. Golam Azam also applied for citizenship once from London and then in 1978 but was refused. He (Prof. Golam Azam) also surrendered his Pakistani Passport after coming back to Bangladesh in 1978. In a show case notice, the Barrister said, the Home Ministry told Prof. Golam Azam about the loss of his citizenship and that he became the Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami in violation of Article 38 of the Constitution.

Prof. Golam Azam was also asked to show cause by 10 AM on 24 March, 1992 as to why legal action should not be taken against him.

The hearing began before the High Court Division bench comprising Mr. Justice Ismailuddin Sarkar and Mr. Justice Badrul Islam Chowdhury.

Barrister A.R. Yusuf was assisted by Barrister Abdur Razzak, Advocate Sheikh Ansar Ali, Raisuddin and others. Attorney General Aminul Huq and Deputy Attorney General Hasan Arif appeared for the State.

The hearing will resume today (Monday) at 10:30 AM.

According to UNB, Azam filed the writ petition with the High Court challenging a showcase notice served upon him by the government on 23 March under the Foreigners Act as to why he will not be deported from the country as a foreign national.

The government step came in the wake of vigorous agitation sponsored by the Ekattarer Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee which staged a mock trial of Golam Azam on 26 March last on charge of his "war crime."

Barrister Yusuf continued, Golam Azam, has been staying in this country for the last 14 years, and the then Home Minister A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman in 1980 told parliament that Golam Azam's petition for citizenship was under active consideration by the government, he submitted adding but yet he has not been given back citizenship.

He said Golam Azam, before being served with the showcase notice in March this year, had been enjoying all civic and political rights of a citizen of this country.

20 Jul Session

92AS1382B Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 21 Jul 92
pp 1, 8

[Text] Golam Azam didn't apply for citizenship in time and was engaged in campaigning abroad against independence of the country after its liberation the Attorney General [AG] told the court Monday upholding government position that the accused is a foreigner staying here illegally, reports UNB.

Defending the affidavit in position, Aminul Huq said Azam did neither apply for citizenship nor surrender his passport to Bangladesh High Commission in UK when 14,187 expatriate Bangladeshis surrendered their Pakistani passports there after independence.

Golam Azam formed "East Pakistan Resurrection Committee" in 1972 in Lahore, attended a youth conference in Riyadh and Islamic Foreign Ministers conference in Libya campaigning against recognition to the liberated Bangladesh, stated the affidavit submitted by the government on the second day of hearing of the much-talked-about citizenship case against the Jamaat leader in a High Court division bench.

Between 1973 and 1976, the government side further said, he (Azam) met the King of Saudi Arabia seven times and urged him not to recognise and give any financial assistance to Bangladesh.

Refuting defence counsels' contention on the enlistment of Golam Azam in the voters' roll as a citizen of the country, the Attorney General told the court that he had given his misleading identity.

"Although Golam Azam's name was seen in the voters' list twice, keeping his father's name and address same, it was mentioned in one that he is a businessman and, in another, a serviceholder," the AG said.

"What business does he do?" Huq questioned.

Petition of the petitioner and affidavit in reply were also placed yesterday before the High Court division bench comprising Justice Ismailuddin Sarkar and Justice Badrui Alam.

Submitting in reply, defence counsel A.R. Yusuf said the government, in saying that he was a citizen of this territory, now mapping Bangladesh, admitted that Golam Azam is a citizen of this country.

Azam, who left the then East Pakistan in November 1971 against his will, had to stay outside the country till 1978, the barrister argued, adding that his attempt to return to the country on 3 December failed because of an adverse situation.

Continuity of his stay in the country, required of a citizen as per Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary) Provisions Order 1972, was not possible for the circumstances, he said.

"Although physically he was not in Bangladesh, that was against his will and he came back to the country in July 1978."

He had no other option than using Pakistani passport, Barrister Yusuf said.

"Use of passport and citizenship are not synonymous," he added to defuse the contention on Golam Azam's post-independence asylum in Pakistan and entry into Bangladesh with Pakistani passport.

Government statement about his conduct outside the country cannot be related to his citizenship, Yusuf further pleaded.

His name had been enlisted in the country's voters' list twice, Yusuf said, adding voting right is applicable only for a citizen.

Citing article 3 of the citizenship order, the defence lawyer said there is no scope for disqualifying any citizen. One cannot be stripped of citizenship on doubts, he argued. Besides, he said, Golam Azam's name was not in the list of the 195 prisoners of war.

Argument in the case will begin today.

21 Jul Session

92AS1382A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 20 Jul 92 pp 1,8

[Text] In the hearing of Prof. Golam Azam's writ petition, Barrister A.R. Yusuf argued that within the meaning of Article 2 of the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provision) Order 1972 "Prof. Golam Azam is a citizen of Bangladesh by birth having a permanent residence in the country."

In his argument yesterday (Tuesday), Barrister Yusuf said that the notification disqualifying him as a citizen of Bangladesh was made by an executive order and that, too, was not published in any official notification, and as such it lost every effect in the eyes of law.

The hearing of Prof. Golam Azam's writ petition challenging the notification disqualifying him as a citizen of Bangladesh continued Tuesday before a High Court Division Bench for the third day. The bench comprised of Mr. Justice Mohammad Ismail Uddin Sarkar and Mr. Badrul Islam Chowdhury.

In his argument, Barrister Yusuf referred to the Article 2 of the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provision) Order 1971, which says "notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, on the commencement of this order, every person shall be deemed to be citizen of Bangladesh."

Then he quoted clauses (1) and (2) of the Article 2 of the Bangladesh Citizenship Order, 1972 which provides that if any person is permanent resident of the territories now comprising Bangladesh, or one's dependent is, in the course of his employment or for pursuit of studies, residing in a country which was at war with or engaged in military operations against Bangladesh and is prevented from returning to Bangladesh, such person, or his dependents, shall be deemed to continue to be resident in Bangladesh.

Barrister Yusuf argued that the clause (1) of the Article 2 of PO [Provision Order] 149 of 1972 was relevant in the case of Prof. Golam Azam since he, his father and his grandfathers—all were born in the territory, now called Bangladesh and he was a permanent resident of this territory on 25 March 1971 and he continues to be a resident of the territory.

Furthermore, Barrister Yusuf argued that the Bangladesh Citizenship (temporary provision) Order 1972 commenced with effect from 26 March 1971 and Prof. Golam Azam continued to be a resident on the day of commencement of the Order. The temporary absence, the Barrister argued, of Prof. Golam Azam from Bangladesh from November 1971 to July 1978 was a temporary absence in the "eye of law." Then he referred to a decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court explaining the position of Mr. Abdul Huq of Satkhira district. He pointed out that Mr. Huq returned to this land in August

1975 with a Pakistani passport as temporary travel document and he surrendered it to the Bangladesh authorities. His family members lived in his Satkhira residence while he was temporarily absent for about five years and he then resided in Pakistan, he argued. After about five years he returned the territory now known as Bangladesh and surrendered his Pakistani passport, he argued and said that Prof. Golam Azam's case was far better than that of Mr. Abdul Huq.

In his argument, Barrister Yusuf also cited the examples of the late Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury who also came to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport and surrendered it to the authorities concerned after the political changeover in August, 1975.

Barrister Yusuf referred to the Article 122 of the Constitution of Bangladesh which provides for eligibility of a citizen for becoming a voter. He mentioned that Prof. Golam Azam was enrolled as voter both in 1983 and 1990. This testified that he is enjoying his political right being a permanent resident of his country.

Barrister A.R. Yusuf, Barrister Abdur Razzaq and Advocate Ashrafuzzaman appeared for Prof. Golam Azam while Attorney General Aminul Islam, Deputy Attorney General Hasan Arif and Assistant Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mustafa for the state.

Former Industries Secretary Convicted, Jailed

92AS1327A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 Jul 92 p 10

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Former Industries Secretary and former Chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) AKM Mosharraf Hossain was convicted in Dhaka on Thursday in a corruption case for abusing official position and 'usurping government money,' reports BSS.

Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, Mr. Md. Abdul Gafur, found Mr. Hossain guilty under Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947 and sentenced him to suffer simple imprisonment for 3 years and pay a fine of Taka 6 (six) lakh, in default to suffer additional six months RI [Rigorous Imprisonment].

The prosecution case in brief was that Mr. Hossain while serving as Industries Secretary (Between 13 April, 1988 and 2 February, 1990) through illegal means and misusing his official position drew salary benefits and travel allowance from BCIC (where he was Chairman) and at the same time, realised government money to the tune of Taka 564,449 from the Industries Ministry aimed at grabbing the sum. Such usurpation was in violation of Section 409 of Bangladesh Penal Code and Section 5(2) of clause 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947, the prosecution stated.

The court found Mr. Mosharraf Hossain to have violated specific directive and provision of the government in drawing a total sum of Taka 564,449 as advance from BCIC on account of pay, and other benefits when he served as Industries Secretary. The prosecution proved that the former Industries Secretary deliberately and illegally drew the above sum from BCIC to usurp those. Mr. Hossain in doing so had committed offence under Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947, the Court said.

Mr. Hossain was sentenced last month to suffer two years RI in another corruption case. With Thursday's judgement, two out of five cases instituted against him so far have been disposed of. Mr. Hossain is a co-accused with former President H.M. Ershad in two corruption cases.

FIR [First Information report] in this case was filed on 29 January, 1991 and charge sheet submitted on 25 February, 1991. A total of 20 prosecution witnesses testified in this case which was initially started in a Division Court, but transferred to the fourth Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court.

Further Developments in Ershad Prosecution

Hearing on Power Misuse

92AS1332A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 2 Jul 92 pp 1, 12

[Text] The hearing of the proposed charges against the former President H.M. Ershad of misuse of power and working with malafide intention to draw pecuniary benefits either for himself or others ended on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Divisional Special Judge, Mr. Mohammad Ali after two days of hearing, fixed 8 July as the date for framing formal charge against Ershad and five others.

The case revolves round waiving of interests amounting to about Taka 35 lakh payable by a private poultry farm to Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) against loan.

A total of six persons including former Industries Secretary A.K.M. Mosharraf Hossain have been implicated in the Special Case No. 21 of 1992—the State versus Lt. Gen. Ershad and others.

Public Prosecutor who made the proposed charge said that Mr. Ershad and Mr. Mosharraf Hossain by misusing their official positions and resorting to corrupt practices had influenced BSB to exempt Taka 34,86,801 [as published] realisable from the Three Star Poultry Farm Limited, Savar, as interest against loan taken from BSB. Ershad was proposed to be the principal accused with Mosharraf Hossain as co-accused, while 4 others all associated with the Three Star Poultry Farm as abettors.

Prosecution charged that former President of accepting an application from Nurun Nahar Shelly, one of the accused, for exempting interest and Ershad had complied without enquiring into the matter. Ershad's Attorney, while opposing the charge on the first day of hearing, said receiving or accepting an application by an elected President was no crime.

Mr. M.A. Noor, appearing on Wednesday on behalf of Mr. Mosharraf Hossain said his client's handing over of the petition to the Managing Director of BSB should not be construed as an act of illegality or offence. Mr. Noor said his client neither passed any order to waive interest nor influenced any board member to do so. The defence lawyer said it was an irony that all the four members who voted for the relief are outside, while his client who presided over the board meeting was here to face the charges.

Earlier at the outset of the hearing, Ershad's defence counsel Yusuf Hossain Humayun drew the attention to the court on the posting of a plainclothed policeman near the principal accused (Ershad).

Mr. Humayun said such posting was uncomfortable to both the accused and the lawyers defending them. At one stage Ershad stood up in the dock to express his annoyance.

Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzak Khan disagreed with the contention of Ershad and his lawyer and said policeman had been posted near the dock for a long time and added that the practice has been discontinued for only a few days.

Later, on the advice of the judge, the member of the law enforcing agency was asked to sit at the centre of court near other court employees.

Mr. Ershad and Mr. Mosharraf Hossain were often seen whispering among themselves in the dock.

Poultry Farm Case

92AS1332B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 9 Jul 92 p 1

[Text] Former President H.M. Ershad had been indicted in yet another case when fresh charges of corruption and abuse of official position were brought against him in the court of the Divisional Session Judge, Dhaka, reports BSS.

The one man court chaired by Divisional Session Judge Md. Mohammad Ali accepted prosecution's charge that the former head of state misused his official position to benefit one of his Jatiya party men by illegally waiving interests against loans extended by Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB). The charge said that Mr. Ershad, in collusion with others in this case worked with a malafide intention either for his own benefit for others enjoying his favour, caused a loss amounting to Taka 34,86,801.00 [as published] to the Shilpa Bank-realizable from Three Star Poultry farm as interests on the loan.

Ershad Accused of Illegal Radar Purchase

92AS1401A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 10 Jul 92 p 1

[Article: "Air Force Radar Purchase; Case Against Ershad, Sultan Mahmud Filed"]

[Text] Deposed president Ershad has been accused of misappropriation of Taka 64 crore from the public exchequer, reports UNB.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption has filed the case against Ershad and four others—former Air Chief Sultan Mahmud, former Deputy Air Chief Momtaz Uddin Ahmed and Directors of United Traders Shahzad Ali and AKM Musa—for irregular purchase of a radar.

It is stated that in 1980, Sadruddin, the then Air Chief proposed to late President Ziaur Rahman to purchase high power and low looking level "Radar" for Bangladesh Air Force.

A committee, called "Radar purchase committee" consisting of three members headed by the then Group Captain Toufique Rahman was formed and decision was taken by that committee to purchase it from Thomsons-SF Company of France. But the purchase was dropped as Ministry of Finance could not provide the money.

Later, Ministry of Defence ordered Air Force headquarters to supply them necessary information about "make and type" of the proposed Radar. The then Air Chief Sultan Mahmud remained silent to pass any opinion rather he created a new "plot" and gave decision to send abroad a new team called

"Radar Purchase Team" and recommended the team to tour U.S.A., Great Britain and Italy.

It is found that Sultan Mahmud wilfully and with ill motive excluded the earlier decision to purchase the radar from France and gave his opinion to purchase it from U.S.A.

Momtazuddin Ahmed, the then Deputy Air Chief, supported his opinion with the knowledge of former President HM Ershad

and accordingly they purchased the Radar from U.S.A through United Traders, a local agent, and thereby "misappropriated" a total of Taka 64 crore.

Ershad has already been sentenced to 13 years in jail for keeping illegal arms and amassing wealth beyond known sources of income. He is facing more than half a dozen corruption cases.

Opposition Parties Score Budget Provisions

92AS1389A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 20 Jun 92 pp 1, 10

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Awami League termed the National Budget for 1992-93 'a prescription' of some international agencies and said it will further increase the country's dependence as well as the number of hapless people, reports UNB.

The party's primary reaction on the proposed Budget came at its central working committee meeting held Friday at 29 Minto Road with Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

A resolution of the meeting said that the Finance Minister had produced the next year's budget without considering its side effects and long term development plan.

"The budget is full of contradictions and inconsistency," the resolution said adding that it will not help remove poverty, unemployment and dependence on others.

The government also predicted increased growth, employment, investment and production as well as removal of poverty while announcing the last budget, the meeting said, but after one year it now shows that no sector has achieved the target.

The resolution said that the Finance Minister, without reviewing the last year's performance, had expressed high optimism while announcing the next year's budget.

The meeting said that in the outgoing budget, Tk.[Taka]20 crore were allocated for poverty alleviation but no such fund has been earmarked in the new budget for this sector although majority of the people live under poverty line and the number of destitutes is more than 10 percent of the population.

It criticised the cut in the VGD [Vulnerable Group Development] test relief expenditure from Taka 292 crore of the outgoing fiscal to Taka 272 crore in the new Budget, which will affect about 14 lakh poor families.

The meeting refuted the Finance Minister's claim of increase in savings and investment, saying that investment cannot be increased by changing the rate of interests in an under-developed country like Bangladesh.

It said improvement of law and order, skilled management, accountability, efficient administration and confidence of the entrepreneurs are the pre-requisites for enhancing the investment. But the present Government has failed to fulfil these conditions.

When the Asian Development Bank (ADB) predicted not more than one percent increase in the country's investment during next fiscal, the Finance Minister projected more than 5 percent increase on this head, the meeting said. To achieve the 5 percent target, the domestic investment must be increased by at least 20 percent, it added.

The meeting criticised the enhanced allocation of Taka 124 crore in unproductive sectors and called it a breach of pre-election commitment of the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] Government.

It said restructuring of the taxation system as introduced by the Finance Minister in the name of market economy will only turn Bangladesh into a market of foreign countries.

In the name of liberal trade policy, the country will be made a market for foreign goods without protecting the interest of the local industries.

The meeting said agricultural production has been discouraged by proposing withdrawal of subsidy to agricultural inputs. It criticised imposition of new tax on diesel engine having 3 to 20 horse powers.

It said the new adjustment of tax on income and resources will not help improve the lot of commonman. On the contrary, the presumptive taxation will encourage means of corruption.

The meeting said despite the low fuel price in world market, the reduction of petrol price by 30 paisa per litre is nothing but a mockery.

It was also critical of proposed imposition of VAT [value-added tax] on gas, water and bricks.

The meeting urged the government to withdraw the additional fiscal measures proposed in the budget by reducing wastage and expenditure in unproductive sectors, and building an accountable and efficient administration.

Our Staff correspondent adds: Mr. Nirmal Sen, acting Secretary of Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, in a statement on Friday said the proposed budget announced in the parliament in the absence of the Opposition will not help in building a self-reliant economy in the country.

Mr. Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and Mr. Nurul Islam, President and General Secretary respectively of CPB [Communist Party of Bangladesh] in a statement said they were doubtful if the proposed budget would be effective in the welfare of the common people.

A meeting of Bangladesh Muslim League chaired by its president Kazi Abdul Kader said the proposed Budget was prepared to exploit the poor people.

Mr. Dilip Barua, convener of Patriotic Democratic Front, in a statement on Friday expressed his resentment over announcing budget in the absence of the Opposition in the Parliament.

Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed and Pankaj Bhattachariya, President and General Secretary respectively of National Awami Party in a statement on Friday said the proposed budget reflected the wishes of donor countries and resented its announcement in the absence of the Opposition in the Parliament.

Mr. Shajahan Siraj MP [member of Parliament] and Nazrul Islam President and General Secretary respectively of JSD [Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal] (Siraj) in a statement said the proposed budget was not a people-oriented economic step.

Government Urged To Speed Economic Development

92AS1251B Dhaka BANGLAR BANI in Bengali 7 Jul 92 p 4

[Editorial: "The Way to Self-Reliance"]

[Text] The cooperative system is the name of a successful movement on the question of socio-economic development for an individual, group or even a nation. A century ago the cooperative system was introduced in the subcontinent. Since then considering cooperatives as a movement was given a recognition as a means for socio-economic development. But no steps were taken, even today, to officially utilize this system in

its overall sense for national development. However, individually, some people in the society have always accepted different projects under the cooperative system and worked on them. At the official level only a few cooperative projects were also undertaken. In an underdeveloped agricultural country the state machinery has never given any importance to the application of a successful program under the cooperative system to the overall national life of the country and thereby kept the system a separate issue.

Around the cooperatives, there are several government offices and also a ministry in Bangladesh. The government offices, which basically look after government-run projects, also extend cooperation to anyone who unofficially takes initiative in this field. But the government has never exploited the opportunity it had for guiding a big socio-economic development program under the cooperative system in this largely populated and agriculturally dependent nation. Thus, to the people, the cooperative system remained only an idea. Government leaders hold meetings of the cooperatives from time to time and try to draw the attention of the people by delivering good speeches. However, no one has given any serious thought to the great contribution the cooperative system could really make in the field of our national development. A great conspiracy lies behind it. The capitalist world and their agents in this country do not want the cooperative system to be successful and the government should consider any sincere initiative in this regard. They refuse to give up their opportunity to monopolize earning profits and indulge in all kinds of activities with the objective of single-handedly controlling the socio-economic development work in the poorer countries. Even the nongovernmental organizations, which work in the country, do not like to see the emergence and success of any cooperative system built at the people's own initiative. This is done because they also want to keep everything under their own control.

The significance of national development under the cooperatives always was to achieve true self-reliance. The capitalist world could never easily accept the movement of the poorer nations to achieve self-reliance because they did not like to bring any uncertainty to their own business in monopoly investment. Bowing before such national and international conspiracy a building bearing the name of cooperatives still nominally stands today in the country. It cannot, however, do anything independently. The government is still doing some work in the name of the cooperatives and also invests some money in that field. Because this system for national development attained an international recognition, its importance remained throughout the world. An international cooperative day was recently observed in our country and the prime minister was the chief guest at a meeting organized in this connection. Announcing the exemption of debts up to 5,000 Taka for the cooperative workers like the farmers, he said that cooperative workers will have to unite and build up an honest, effective, well-organized, and time-bearing cooperative movement—similar to the unity already built up in the country without the consideration of any party or groups—in the struggle for the setting up of an economic democracy. The prime minister made this statement primarily because there has existed for a long time large-scale corruption in the cooperative system, which is the main cause of its failure in this country. Despite having 120,000 committees and their 1,059 organizations, 12 national federations and their 5.7 million cooperative

members with 7.6 billion Taka worth of property, mismanagement, corruption, conflict, and waste exist in the cooperatives and as a result they never saw any profit.

But everyone knows that the cooperative system is the best method to boost development work in the country. Only through the cooperative system was it possible to achieve speedy development in the agricultural and small, industrial fields in many countries of the world. We hope that the government will seriously consider whether it is possible to take the initiative to build up the cooperative movement once again with new confidence. The doors for attaining self-reliance through this means have not yet been closed. Like many other nations of the world this system has also great possibilities in our country.

Federal Budget Attacked on Industrial Sector Allotment

92AS1251A Dhaka BANGLAR BANI in Bengali 8 Jul 92 p 5

[Article by Badruddin Umar: "An Anti-Industrial National Budget and Its Significance"]

[Text] The special feature of the budget placed in Parliament this year by the Bangladesh finance minister as a representative of democracy, which has earned the image of an "institution," is that it has not only created adverse reaction among different sections of people but also received sharp opposition from chambers of commerce and owners of small and medium-size industries. The primary reason for this all-round opposition so that this year's budget has not only hurt in general terms the interests of the public and brought miseries to their lives, but it has also taken steps to fully protect and expand the interests of the imperialists in this country by sacrificing the interests of local industrial owners, especially those who are showing enthusiasm to build up industries. Such a budget is a disgraceful episode in the history of budget writing for a nation like Bangladesh, which is a toady of and dependent on imperialism.

While taking a cursory view of the budget it might seem that compared to earlier years this budget is less of a tax burden on the people. But an analysis of the tax structure reveals that the majority of the goods on which tax has been imposed will bring greater pressure in the lives of the poorer and middle-class people instead of the rich. Nevertheless, it can be said that compared to earlier budgets general pressure of tax is less this time.

The main feature of the 1992-93 budget is its open-import policy, which is contrary to the industrial interests of the country. It is called open because like earlier budgets there is no secret, or attempts being made to keep anything secret, in it. Everything has been stated frankly and this approach was started by the finance minister.

The budget is an important secret document. Opposition groups hold different types of discussions on it, present demands, or move proposals on things needed to be done or not to be done in the budget. But this time, the finance minister himself while attending different seminars started "throwing light" on the type of budget the country should adopt and the important role that foreign forces or imperialism should play in it. It became obvious from the discussions at the seminars that there was 100-percent interference from imperialism into the budget and the "democratically" elected government was going to present

the 1992-93 Bangladesh budget to Parliament by keeping in mind the interests of imperialism. Exactly the same thing has happened.

Although the way the import policy was declared revealed the imposition of comparatively more taxes on luxury goods for poor and middle-class people, its real harmful effect was the levying of excessive taxes on such raw materials that are being used by different important industries—even those known as import substitution industries—in the country. Imposing taxes in such a manner is the deceitful characteristic of this budget. This measure was taken with a calculation that since no tax was imposed on several items, especially on a large number of items for daily living, fixing duty on raw materials will not catch the eyes of the people and they will, therefore, welcome the budget as a good- and people-oriented budget. But there is no doubt that the levying of excessive duty on the raw materials being used by industry, in the near future will make the whole economy entirely dependent on imports and thereby bring a total collapse to the national economy and astronomically increase the prices of commodities. In fact, it did not take long for it to happen. Calculating the consequences before this import policy became effective, local businessmen already started hiking their prices. Therefore, there is no doubt that with whatever fraudulent motive this budget was written and its tax policy determined, it will fail to keep the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government "popular" until the next voting time.

Whereas it is necessary to keep tariff prices on many imported raw materials to their lowest level, or better not to fix them at all, with the objective of putting the national industry on its own footing, they have imposed duties on them and those duties are also two or three times more than international rates. It is known to all that the textile industry in Bangladesh has been in a crisis for a long time. With the rise in production expenses, on one side, and the black marketing especially from India—on the other, the crisis in the textile industry will increase. The textile plants, which are still operational, will be closed and the markets of foreign textiles will largely expand in the country. This will, on one hand, hike the prices of clothes and, on the other, largely increase unemployment. It will temporarily have a very severe effect on the economy. But the BNP's budget does not consider anything from this angle. The way they have openly fixed their import policy, it will bring a total collapse to the textile industry in the country within a short time.

Not only the textile industry, but it can be said that the import duty on all types of raw materials being used by the local industries, has also been increased to such an extent that it will become impossible for any industry to survive.

In general, there are innumerable sick industries in the country. Already 1,800 of them have formally appealed to the government for help. Besides that there are many small, big and medium-size industries, which remained inoperative under ailing conditions. Adopting a proposal at a recent seminar, the owners of small and medium-size industries said that it will require \$5 billion worth of government loans for the revival of the sick industries in the country. The granting of loans on easy terms and adopting other means of help will increase, on one hand, the national income form the industries, and, on the other, a congenial atmosphere for their growth in the country. Not only the owners of the small and medium-size industries, but even those people—who are dealing with the problems of the sick industries—are also speaking about the need for the

government's initiatives in this regard. But despite all this there is nothing in the budget, which is now being discussed, on reviving sick industries and making them production oriented. In fact, the government has not drawn up any program in this regard. Overall, it has taken measures of the expansion and widening of markets of foreign imperialist industries by weakening or totally destroying the local industries that are still operating. This is the true antinational characteristic of the current government which calls itself as "nationalist."

The most notable feature of fixing tariff prices for this year is that from now on they will be fixed only in dollars and not local currency. This has also further widened the road for total destruction because on earlier occasions, when prices were determined in local currency, it was refixed twice in a year. But as the U.S. dollar is now in a critical condition and very unstable, it needs to fix prices often or several times a year. As a result, it will enhance the opportunity for local businessmen to increase the prices of imported goods at their own sweet desires. This will make it impossible for anyone to refrain the rising trend in prices and pretty soon the country will confront a serious inflation.

The finance minister in his budget speech pointed out that there is 5-percent inflation in the country. This statement was also nothing less than a kind of deception. It is natural for any country to have increased inflation during any development work and that has happened all the time. Inflation in Bangladesh is much more than 5-percent and the important factor is that it is taking place without any development work in the country. The main cause of this inflation is not due to the cost of development work, but for increased expenses in unproductive spheres and also for various activities of the black marketers and businessmen.

The issue of bank loans is also linked with the industries. Bangladesh has now been turned into a nation of bank robbers. Many owners of big industries and business concerns after taking loans worth millions of taka from the banks have escaped and there is no way that they can be arrested. It is known to everyone why they cannot be arrested and there is no need for any discussion about it here. But no provision has been created in the budget for those other owners of industries existing in the country—barring those robbers—who have shown the enthusiasm and the desire to build up industries. Moreover, the rate of interest and existing system of the repayment of interest are not at all compatible for any industrial development. It is a simple fact that if interests are fixed at higher rates for any industrial loans, it creates discouragement to investment and becomes an obstacle to any industrial development. Therefore, it is very necessary to reduce the current rates of interest in the budget and bring them at par with the needs for industrial development in the country.

Moreover, it is necessary to change the system of bank's computing interest right after the sanction of loans and in many cases to start the repayment of interest earlier than the commencement of production. Unless a change is brought about in this manner in the interest policy, an indebted industrial unit will become sick way before the start of its production.

It needs to be mentioned here that this budget is considered so important that even the ministers are also severely criticizing it outside of Parliament in different seminars. A similar criticism of the budget made recently at a seminar by the minister of textiles and industries was really very surprising. This proves

that not only the government policy but also its whole system and administration is fast disintegrating.

Such a thing will definitely take place because the group, which is currently reigning in Bangladesh, came into existence through plunder, clandestine activities and black marketeering. They have also nothing within them that can be called national feelings. They are the slaves of imperialism and from this side they are above any party, group, or organization. Any political party belonging to this section will operate in a similar manner after coming to power. Not only that, but there is also definitely going to be further deterioration in the situation.

Therefore, there is nothing surprising in the budget the finance minister has presented in the current financial year. There is no question of opposing economically the policies he has set in the budget because the whole matter is political. Without launching a political struggle not only against the existing government but also the group holding the power and totally uprooting them from the country, there is no other way to attain industrial development than by freeing the people from the hands of such a budget and bring basic changes in their lives.

Finance Minister Discusses State of Economy

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[Text] The national growth rate during the last two years has gone down compared to the previous year.

This was disclosed by Finance Minister Saifur Rahman in the Parliament on Wednesday in reply to a question. He said that the national growth rate during 1990-92 3.5 percent against 4.2 percent during 1972-79 and 4.8 percent in 1980-89.

Replying to another question the Finance Minister informed the House that during the last 20 years since 1972 Taka was devalued 76 times and it was appreciated 19 times. He told the House that during the last fiscal year Taka was devalued 10 times by 8.23 percent against U.S. dollar.

In reply to a question, the Finance Minister said that the cost of living had gone up by 9.1 percent in 1991-92 compared to the index in 1972-72.

The Finance Minister disclosed in the Parliament that the country's total foreign debt now stood at 12,129.76 million U.S. dollar (Taka 28,243.75 crores). The country's debt servicing now amounted to Taka 1,364.58 crores.

Mr. Saifur Rahman informed the House that Taka 1,412.07 crore were realised as VAT [value-added tax] during 1991-92 fiscal year.

In reply to a question the Finance Minister also said that the country's foreign currency reserve amounted to 161 crore U.S. dollars on 30 June, 1992 compared to 88 crore U.S. dollars and 52 crore U.S. dollars during the same period in 1991 and 1990 respectively.

Govt has no plan for new bank

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman on Wednesday announced that the Government had no plan to give permission to any new bank in the country now.

Replying to a question in the Parliament the Finance Minister said that the Government gave permission to establish banks after considering the economic demand in the country.

In reply to another question the Finance Minister informed the House that the banks in the public sector earned Taka 1,593.79 crore and spent Taka 1,540.41 crore in 1991 whereas the income and expenditure of the private banks in the country during the year were Taka 948.53 crore and Taka 918.53 crore respectively.

The Finance Minister told the House that the total outstanding loan from banks and financial institutions now amounted to Taka 8,151.53 crore. He said that during 1991-92 fiscal year the nationalised banks and financial institutions in the public sector waived interest on industrial loan to 2,632 units.

The Finance Minister disclosed in the House that according to report submitted by two audit firms the total loss of BCI [Bangladesh Commerce and Investment] bank amounted to Taka 247.55 crore. The operation of the branches of BCI bank was stopped on 4 July last year, he informed.

In reply to a question the Finance Minister informed the House that BCI Limited had 24 branches when its operation was stopped by a Government order on 20 April this year. He asserted that the BCI Limited was never a bank and it could not take any deposit as a non-banking financial institution. He also reiterated that the Government had no responsibility of repaying money to the depositors of BCI. He said that the depositors of BCI could take legal measures to recover their money from BCI.

HBFC loan

Replying to another question the Finance Minister informed that House Building Finance Corporation [HBFC] had given loan to 33,608 persons and the loan now amounted to Taka 1,476.30 crore with interest of which outstanding loan was now Taka 342.57 crore.

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